DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 149 945 RC 010 372

TITLE	Spanish Speaking Women and Higher Education: A Review of Their Current Status. Minority Women and Higher Education #2.
INSTITUTION	Association of American Colleges, Washington, D.C. Project on the Status and Education of Women.
PUB DATE	Mar 75
NOTE	6p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; *Census Figures; *Economic Status; Educational Background; Educational Status Comparison; *Females; Higher Education; Income; Mexican Americans; Occupations; Puerto Ricans; *Spanish Speaking; Statistical Data; Working Women
IDENTIFIERS	Chicanas

ABSTRACT

Educators are increasingly seeking information about minority women as they attempt to develop realistic, viable programs to benefit them. This paper summarizes some of the relevant data concerning the educational and economic status of Spanish speaking women. Whenever possible, ethnic variations are noted. In general, the data are divided into the following three categories: Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Other Spanish Origin. Six consulting agencies and Spanish speaking women's rights organizations which may be able to provide information or professional services to academic institutions are listed. According to the March 1973 census data, about 5.4 million of the 10.6 million Spanish speaking people in the United States were female. Very few of these women were highly educated. As of March 1973, the median number of years of education for all Spanish speaking women (14 years or over) was only 9.7. Of all Spanish speaking women 14 years or over, 5.9% had from one to three years of college. In all only 2.7% had completed four years of college in 1973. Of the 486,221 college and university teachers reported in the 1970 Census, only 3,159 were women of Spanish origin. In March 1973, 40% of all Spanish origin women over 15 years of age were in the paid labor force. The majority of these were employed as "operatives" or in clerical or service jobs. Only 6.8% had professional or technical jobs; 3.6% held non-farm managerial or administrative jobs. (NQ)

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MINORITY WOMEN & HIGHER EDUCATION #2

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The Project on the Status and Education of Women has received a number of requests for facts about the educational and economic status of minority women -- Black, Spanish speaking, Native American, and Asian-American. Educators are increasingly seeking information about minority women as they attempt to develop realistic, viable programs to benefit them. In response to these queries, the Project has begun a series of brief summaries on the status of minority women. This, the second of the series, focuses on the educational and employment status of Spanish speaking women. In addition, resource groups on Spanish speaking women are listed on the last page.

Although all minority group members -- both female and male -- are, on the average, at an educational disadvantage when compared to whites, minority women generally fare less well than minority men, just as white women fare less well than white men. It is clear that minority women are affected by both sex and race discrimination and that they will not have a fair economic or educational opportunity unless and until both types of discrimination are eliminated. Just as efforts to remove racial barriers help minority women as well as minority men, efforts to remove sexual barriers benefit minority women as well as white women.

SPANISH SPEAKING WOMEN AND HIGHER EDUCATION:
A REVIEW OF THEIR CURRENT STATUS

Discrimination against Spanish speaking women is a many-faceted phenomenon. In addition to discrimination because of sex, they can also meet discrimination because of race, color, national origin or language.* These factors often work together to limit both their educational attainment and earning power.

Spanish speaking Americans are not a homogeneous group. The culture, history and socio-economic status of the various ethnic groups of Spanish origin vary considerably. Frequently, however, people in the Unites States who are of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American or South American backgrounds share similar problems with both one another and other minority group members.

Spanish speaking women are increasingly speaking out and asking that the unique discrimination they often face be both recognized and eradicated. Towards this end, a number of Spanish speaking women have formed groups in their communities and on campuses across the country. The goals of these organizations vary from ensuring that Spanish speaking women are included in an institution's affirmative action efforts, to developing course proposals and ethnic studies curricula on Spanish speaking women.

This paper summarizes some of the relevant data concerning the educational and economic status of Spanish speaking women. Whenever possible, ethnic variations are noted. In general, the data are divided into the following three categories:

MEXICAN-AMERICAN:	persons of Mexican heritage. A Mexican-American woman is also properly referred to as a "Chicana."
PUERTO RICAN:	persons of Puerto Rican heritage. Our data are only for Puerto Rican women who reside in the mainland United States.
OTHER SPANISH ORIGIN:	persons of Cuban, Central and South American, or still "other" Spanish background.

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* Understandably, a great number of Spanish speaking people in the United States do not use English at home. Census data show that just over 10 percent of Cubans speak English at home, while a little over one quarter of Puerto Ricans and over half of Mexican Americans use English at home. 1969 Census data showed that almost 30 percent of Spanish heritage women over 25 years old could not read and write English. The fact that, in that same year, 90 percent of younger women (between 10 and 24 years) could read and write English, is evidence that bilingual education programs have begun to provide Spanish speaking women with the necessary facility with English. As of 1972, Spanish was spoken in the homes of 65% of Spanish origin population.

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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

About half (5.4 million) of the 10.6 million Spanish speaking people in this country are female, according to March 1973 Census data.* Forty-nine percent of the Mexican Americans and 55 percent of the Puerto Ricans reported were women.[1] For a variety of reasons, many people believe that the Census undercounted the Spanish speaking population in the United States by as much as forty percent.

Most Spanish speaking people in this country live in cities: in fact, eighty-three percent live in urban areas.[2] Each of the fifty states has a substantial Spanish origin population, ranging from a few thousand to several hundred thousand.[3] Over half of the Spanish speaking population is concentrated in five southwestern states -- California, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado. Other states with particularly large Spanish origin populations are New York, Florida, Illinois, Michigan and New Jersey.[4]

The Spanish speaking population in this country is younger than the population as a whole. The median age of Spanish speaking persons in the United States is 20.1 years, compared to 28.1 years for all persons.

MEDIAN AGE OF U.S. SPANISH SPEAKING POPULATION[5]
MARCH 1973

	Female	Male
Mexican-American	19.5 yrs.	18.0 yrs.
Puerto Rican	19.2 yrs.	18.1 yrs.
Other Spanish Origin	26.6 yrs.	22.2 yrs.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Very few Spanish speaking women are highly educated. As of March 1974, the median number of years of education for all Spanish speaking women (14 years old or over) was only 9.7. While this is not much less than the median level of education for men of Spanish origin (10.0 years), it is far below the median level of white men and women (12.3 years each).[6]

Similar 1973 data reveals ethnic variation in median level of education for Spanish speaking persons in the United States, 14 years old or over:

MEDIAN YEARS OF EDUCATION,[7]
MARCH 1973

	Female	Male
Mexican American	9.0 yrs.	9.1 yrs.
Puerto Rican	9.4 yrs.	9.5 yrs.
Other Spanish Origin	11.8 yrs.	12.0 yrs.

One of the reasons why the educational level of individuals of "Other Spanish Origin" is higher than that of the other groups is that this category includes a number of highly educated Cuban-Americans who immigrated to the United States in the 1960's. It is therefore not surprising that women of "Other Spanish Origin" are more likely to have a college degree than their Mexican-American or Puerto Rican counterparts.

SPANISH SPEAKING WOMEN WHO HAVE COMPLETED
FOUR OR MORE YEARS OF COLLEGE, BY AGE[8]
MARCH 1973

	14-24 yrs.	25-34 yrs.	35-44 yrs.	45 or more	total%
Mexican-American	0.9%	2.1%	1.7%	1.2%	5.9%
Puerto Rican	0.6%	0.7%	2.5%	--+	3.8%
Other Spanish Origin	2.7%	9.3%	8.8%	6.1%	26.9%

* Beginning with the 1970 Census, four standards were used to identify Spanish speaking Americans: birthp[lace] and birthplace of parents; mother tongue; Spanish family name; and Spanish origin.

+ Rounds to zero percent.

A number of women of Spanish origin have some experience in higher education, even though they do not complete four years of college. Of Spanish speaking women (14 years old and over) 5.9 have had from one to three years of college. In all, only 2.7 percent of Spanish speaking women (14 years old and over) had completed four years of college in 1973.[9] In contrast, 3.3 percent of black females, 6.1 percent of white females, and 7.7 percent of white males had completed four years of college.[10]

The number of Spanish speaking women in faculty positions on campus is miniscule. Of the 486,221 college and university teachers reported in the 1970 Census, only 3,159 were women of Spanish heritage. Most of these women were apparently in "fringe" positions. Over half (1,592) were classified as "other specific teachers" and another thirty percent (965) were classified as "not specified teachers."[11] Although the number of women in faculty positions has probably increased somewhat as a result of affirmative action programs, there are still very few Spanish speaking women in high level academic positions. Most Spanish speaking women on campus are in non-professional positions.

ECONOMIC STATUS

Forty percent of all Spanish origin women over age 15 in the United States were in the paid labor force in March 1973. The majority of these 1.3 million Spanish speaking women who work for pay are employed as "operatives"* or in clerical or service jobs. In other words, they are primarily in low status, low paying jobs. Only 6.8 percent of these women have professional or technical jobs, and a scant 3.6 percent hold non-farm managerial or administrative jobs.[12]

There is considerable variation in the work patterns of the three major Spanish speaking groups. Chicanas are more likely to be in the paid labor force than either Puerto Rican women or women of Cuban, South American or Central American heritage. However, women of "Other Spanish Origin" (including Cuban women) are twice as likely to hold professional or technical jobs: 10.3 percent "other Spanish origin" women who work hold professional and technical jobs, compared to 5.2 percent of Chicanas and 5.0 percent for Puerto Rican women.[13]

Spanish speaking people in this country generally earn less than either their white or black counterparts. Spanish speaking women, who often face discrimination because of their sex, as well as their race and national origin, often earn only subsistence incomes.

MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS[14]
MARCH 1972

	Female	Male
Spanish speaking	$2,647	$5,786
Black	$5,147	$7,301
White	$5,998	$10,593

Well over half of all Spanish speaking women made less than $5,000 a year in 1972.

ANNUAL INCOME OF SPANISH SPEAKING WOMEN[15]
1972

	Less than $2,000	$2,000-4,999	$5,000-9,999	Over $10,000
Mexican American	48.5%	36.6%	13.8%	1.1%
Puerto Rican	22.4%	55.6%	20.7%	1.1%
Other Spanish Origin	34.6%	39.7%	21.9%	4.2%

A number of these women must support families on these incomes. In fact, the 1973 Census found that women were heads of 26 percent of Puerto Rican households, 12.6 percent of Mexican American households, and 16.1 percent of households of other Spanish heritage.[16]

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The aspirations and status of Spanish speaking women are changing, even though they continue to face tremendous barriers. While there has been little, if any, study of this phenomenon, a new self-awareness is being experienced by Spanish speaking women on campuses across the country. A Stanford University Chicana student, although speaking specifically of Chicanas, perhaps captured the essence of this change for all Spanish speaking women when she wrote:

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* The Census Bureau defines "operatives" as persons working as manufacturing checkers, dressmakers, drillers, garage and gas station attendants, produce packers, etc. Operative jobs are not skilled trade or craft occupations.

> [She is] ... a new Chicana, a Chicana working within the college system ... [she] sees that her place need not only be in the home.... She is sensing her ability beyond that, yet not excluding it. She will go through the college system to get her degree, and then she realizes she must go on ... she must utilize her degree....[17]

* * *

FOOTNOTES

[1]U.S. Department of Commerce, Social and Economic Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, Persons of Spanish Origin in the United States, March 1973 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, May 1974), page 1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]U.S. Department of Commerce, "Note to Correspondents," news release, March 1972, page 2.

[4]U.S. Department of Commerce, Nosotros, Los Americanos--We, The Americans (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973) p. 9.

[5]U.S. Department of Commerce, Persons of Spanish Origin, p. 19.

[6]U.S. Department of Commerce, Educational Attainment in the United States, March 1973 and 1974, pp. 15-22.

[7]U.S. Department of Commerce, Persons of Spanish Origin, p. 23.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]U.S. Department of Commerce, Educational Attainment in the United States, p. 25-26.

[11]Department of Commerce, Detailed Occupations of Employed Persons by Race and Sex in the United States 1970, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973) p. 1-739.

[12]Department of Commerce, Persons of Spanish Origin in the United States, March 1973, p. 24.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid., p. 7.

[15]Ibid., p. 25.

[16]Ibid., p. 22.

[17]Garcia, Elena H., "Chicana Consciousness: A New Perspective, a New Hope," in La Mujer--En Pie de Lucha, ed. Dorinda Moreno (Mexico: Presas Politicas de Mexico, 1973) p. 4.

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RESOURCE GROUPS

The following list identifies some consulting agencies and Spanish speaking women's rights organizations which may be able to provide information or professional services to academic institutions:

ASPIRA of NEW YORK, INC., 245 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

Aspira is a Puerto Rican self-help agency, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which sponsors a college retention program in the New York City area. The program's eight Spanish speaking counselors visit nearly 2,000 students enrolled in New York City institutions, providing them with personal guidance and academic, career and financial assistance. Aspira also trains counselors to help meet the need for Spanish speaking counselors on regular college and university counseling staffs.

COMISION FEMINIL MEXICANA NACIONAL, INC., 2115 9th Street, Berkeley, CA 94710

The objectives of the Comision include the training of Chicanas to assume positions of leadership. The group plans to disseminate information about the work and achievement of Mexican and Chicana women. For further information, contact Anita Ramos.

CONCILIO MUJERES, 2588 Mission Street, Room 201, San Francisco, CA 94110

An organization begun to promote endeavors beneficial to Chicanas, Concilio publishes a newsletter, La Razon Mestiza ($2.00 annually) in which Chicana publications and activities are reported.

L. MIRANDA & ASSOCIATES, 35 Wisconsin Circle, Chevy Chase, MD 20015

This firm, which is owned and managed by a Puerto Rican woman educator, is able to provide the services of a multi-disciplinary team of women. Their fields include administration, education, women's studies, bilingual education, urban affairs, as well as other academic areas. The firm has also prepared outstanding curriculum and bibliographic materials. For futher information, contact Lourdes Miranda King, President.

MONTAL EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATES, 601 South Brand Boulevard, San Fernando, CA 91340

Specializing in Chicano education, Montal Associates has worked with major universities in developing curriculum materials on Chicanas. The firm, which receives some federal funds, has also administered summer workshops for Chicanas seeking careers in academic administration, and is presently operating a program in English as a second language for adults. For further information, contact Sharon Van Cleve, Director.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PUERTO RICAN WOMEN, INC., (NCPRW) P.O. Box 4804, Cleveland Park Station, Washington, D.C. 20009

NCPRW, an organization which seeks to attain equal rights for Spanish origin, plans to establish a national communications network and leadership training program. NCPRW consists of four chapters, two of which have current education programs. The Hartford, Connecticut chapter has instituted an educational program for Spanish origin women in cooperation with the Greater Hartford Community College. (Contact Ms. Aida Velez Falcon, 57 Sumner Street, Hartford, CT 06105.) The Chicago chapter has a project on bilingual education and the teaching of English as a second language. (Contact Ms. Miriam Cruz, 1450 E. 55th Pl., Apt. 730, Chicago, IL for further information.) Other chapters are in Washington, D.C. (above address) and New York City (contact Ms. Gladys Rivera, 215-48 93rd Ave., Queens Village, N.Y. 11428).

March 1975

THE PROJECT ON THE STATUS AND EDUCATION OF WOMEN of the Association of American Colleges began operations in September of 1971. The Project provides a clearinghouse of information concerning women in education and works with institutions, government agencies, and other associations and programs affecting women in higher education. The Project is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Danforth Foundation, and the Exxon Education Foundation. Publication of these materials does not necessarily constitute endorsement by AAC or any of the foundations which fund the Project.

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